News release

St Swithin casts a shadow across the Open

13 July 2004

The first day of the Open Golf Championship is also St Swithin's Day. With the Met Office forecasting showers for Thursday, the saying goes that if it rains on 15 July, it will rain for 40 days and 40 nights. So what are the prospects for Royal Troon?

The forecast is for cool and showery weather for the Championship, and the wind could also be a factor for the players at times with a brisk south-westerly breeze developing over the weekend. Prospects are better for next week as forecasters predict rising temperatures - so summer isn't over just yet.

St Swithin was a monk who lived in Winchester and died in 862. Legend has it his remains were moved inside the cathedral in 971, after which it rained for 40 days and nights - hence the weather lore began:

St Swithin's Day, if it does rain
Full forty days, it will remain
St Swithin's Day, if it be fair
For forty days, t'will rain no more

Statistics show that there is very little truth in the saying. No occasions in the weather record show a period of wet or dry weather lasting that long after a rainy or dry 15 July. Some years have come close - in 1976, 38 of the following 40 days were dry across southern England but this followed heavy showers and thunderstorms on the evening of the 15th itself.

See the latest four-week forecast

See the latest forecast for SW Scotland

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